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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [KDEM](#) [MOPS](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: ITURI UPDATE: OPERATION EMBER ENDS; FARDC
COMMANDER REPLACED

REF: A. KINSHASA 762
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 359

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (C) MONUC Ituri Brigade Commander General Mahboob Haider Khan announced May 15 the end of Operation Ituri Ember, which had been launched May 9 to eliminate militia control in certain areas of Djugu territory in Ituri District (ref A). The operation, which General Mahboob said had been a success, allowed the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC), backed by MONUC logistical support, to retake the towns of Kafe, Joo, Datule and Loga, which had been under the control of the Congolese Revolutionary Movement (MRC). General Mahboob said the MRC militias were now isolated and adequate measures had been put into place to sever all supply links to the militias.

[1](#)2. (C) MONUC-Bunia Head of Office Sharouh Sharif told PolOff May 15 that General Bob Ngoie has been replaced as the commander of FARDC forces in Ituri. FARDC spokesman Capt. Olivier Mputu told PolOff May 16 that Ngoie had been reassigned as a deputy to the FARDC 9th Military Region Commander General Padiiri Bulenda in Kisangani. Mputu said Ngoie's replacement, General Mbuayamba, was expected to assume command in Bunia by May 19. Neither Sharif nor Ngoie said they knew the official reasons behind Ngoie's reassignment.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: General Ngoie's departure is a welcome development as he was an obstacle to establishing peace and eliminating the militia threat in Ituri, and as he generally failed to hold FARDC troops responsible for exactions and other violations against local populations. His presence as Ituri commander was also one of the reasons some FARDC commandos mutinied in March (ref B), which led to a long pause in anti-militia operations. As Ngoie is the nephew of FARDC Chief of Staff General Kisempia, removing him from the Ituri command was not politically easy. The continuing stabilization of Ituri will rest in large part on the ability of the new FARDC commander to establish his authority and control over a force that is ill-equipped, underpaid, and largely undisciplined. End comment.
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